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SUBJECT Feldshers and Other Sub-Professional Veterinary Personnel/Extent of Shortage of Veterinarians/Percentage of Women Veterinarians

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1. Q. What is the proportion of veterinary feldshers to veterinary doctors in the USSR?
 A. The proportion in 1941 was roughly one to one.
2. Q. Please comment on the training and competence of Soviet feldshers.
 A. They receive excellent training in special four-year high schools which they enter after graduation from primary school. A graduate feldsher has the option of going to work immediately after graduation or, if the authorities consider him sufficiently promising, of entering a veterinary college. The feldshers receive instruction in the same subjects as the veterinary doctors. The curriculum covers pharmacology, anatomy, physiology, pathology, surgery and so on, although the instruction is more superficial than in the veterinary colleges. A trained feldsher in the USSR is a highly reliable individual who is at home with the medical nomenclature and can be trusted in emergencies to function as a reasonably competent substitute for a veterinary doctor. Some Soviet feldshers work largely without supervision and are responsible for routine vaccination and the diagnosis and reporting of outbreaks of infectious disease.
3. Q. What status and responsibilities do feldshers in the Soviet army have?
 A. They normally enter the army as regular recruits and undergo six months of basic military training. At the end of this minimum six-months' period they are eligible for commissions as Leitenants (first lieutenants). They can never advance higher than that rank. According to Soviet army regulations, a military feldsher can never work alone, but must be always under the direct supervision of a veterinarian. Actually, the feldshers in the Soviet army do most of the work while the veterinarians horse around.

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4. Q. What percentage of Soviet veterinarians are women and has there been an increase or decrease since World War II?

A. I would estimate that in 1941 approximately 35% of Soviet veterinarians were women. I have no certain knowledge as to a change in this proportion since World War II but I assume that the percentage of women has increased somewhat. An increase would be indicated by the general shortage of veterinarians throughout the USSR and by losses of military veterinarians sustained during World War II. Further, the percentage of women veterinarians was increasing steadily up to 1941 and I see no reason why this trend should not be expected to continue up to 40 or 45%.

5. Q. Are there any special qualifications for women veterinarians in the USSR?

A. There were no special qualifications in 1941 aside from the ability to pass the entrance examinations and to perform satisfactorily in the college work.

6. Q. Are there many married couples among Soviet veterinarians and what is the government's policy on letting such couples work in the same place?

A. In 1941 about 10% of Soviet veterinarians were married to other veterinarians. In the great majority of cases, these couples were assigned to work in the same areas so that they could see one another often, if not actually live together.

25X1 7. Q. In a previous report [redacted], you said that the USSR is short 700 thousand veterinarians. Is this figure correct? If correct, does it include veterinary personnel of the sub-professional level?

A. I regret having given you an incorrect figure. I meant to say 70 thousand rather than 700 thousand and I would like at this time to estimate the shortage as being between 70 and 100 thousand veterinarians. This does not include sub-professionals and a like number of additional feldshers is needed.

8. Q. Is there a sub-professional class known as veterinary assistants, who receive four years' training, or are these considered feldshers?

A. The feldshers are the only sub-professional class of veterinary personnel who receive four years' training. There are two other sub-professional groups whose members receive six months' special training and who are not always full-time veterinary personnel. First, there are the first-aid feldshers who are trained to do nothing more than give first aid to sick and injured animals. Each collective farm has one of these first-aid feldshers, usually a primary school graduate, but occasionally a high school graduate who volunteers for the job. A primary school education is a requirement, however. The six months' course for these assistants is held during the summer at the Federal Veterinary colleges. The second group is made up of the artificial insemination technicians. They also receive a six months' course at a Veterinary College and must be at least primary school graduates. Their only function is to extract semen from bulls, verify the presence of living spermatozoa under a microscope, and inseminate the cows.

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